Camping in Canada

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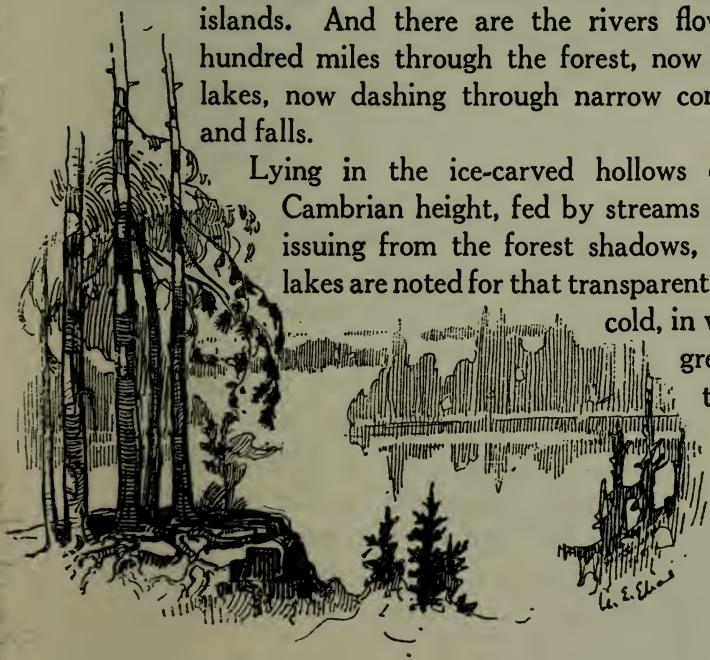
"On every side,
A grim mysterious presence, vast and old,
The forest stretches leagues and leagues away,
With lonely rivers running dark and cold."
—*Lampman.*

FORTUNATELY for the inhabitants of the great cities of eastern America, nature has bounteously provided an immense pleasure-ground in the lake-land, forests and rivers of Canada—all within easy access. National and Provincial Parks and Reservations, covering many hundreds of square miles, and other large districts practically uninhabited and in their natural state, are offered to the visiting tourists.

In these silent places the ways of nature are undisturbed, the sounds of traffic are unheard, peace and beauty reign supreme, and the life of the wilderness pursues its unbroken course through the ages. Unlimited choice is offered of innumerable sites for camp, from the lakelet hidden deep within the forest to the large expanse of water dotted with a thousand tree-covered islands. And there are the rivers flowing for many hundred miles through the forest, now expanding into lakes, now dashing through narrow confines in rapids and falls.



Lying in the ice-carved hollows of the ancient Cambrian height, fed by streams of purest water issuing from the forest shadows, these Canadian lakes are noted for that transparent water, deep and cold, in which the silver-grey and red trout, the gamey bass, the pickerel and doré naturally thrive.

Especially fortunate for the tourist is the existence of that ancient Archæan formation which constitutes a large part of the eastern half of the Dominion, for this region provides a natural pleasure ground of great extent. In general it is not adapted to the needs of the agriculturist, excepting in the valleys, but here is found the ideal region for the camper and the canoeist. Its elevation of about 1,000 feet assures a cool and bracing summer climate; its surface is broken and pictur-

esquely beautiful, covered with forest and innumerable lakes and rivers, often bordered with steep cliffs—a land which for all time will be the favourite resort of the tourist who enjoys life in the open with tent, canoe and rod.

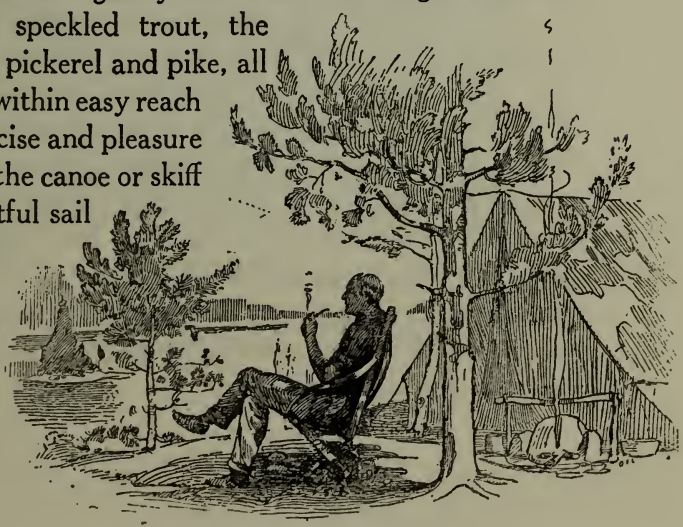
To him who feels the attraction of forest and lake, the exhilarating atmosphere perfumed by pine and balsam, the inviting sense of freedom, camping offers unequalled charms. With the approach of summer comes the craving to lay aside the burden and to seek relief from the monotony of the daily task, to leave the busy street and to enter the quiet paths of nature.

One finds in camping a pleasure, and a physical benefit accumulating day by day. Original, unique, and wholly different from life at the conventional summer resort, camping appeals to those who appreciate nature's wonders and love her various moods. Patience, cheerfulness, and the power to adapt oneself to every change of condition or weather are the absolute requisites for the enjoyment of a trip. A suitable outfit, a fine canoe, and a trusty guide will not make a happy, successful trip unless the tourist is able to enter into the true spirit of the wilderness.

Camping may be of two varieties, the permanent camp, where one remains for the season, and the shifting camp, in which case one pushes on from day to day, penetrating ever further into the wilderness and exploring new lakes and rivers. For either variety, Canada offers unlimited choice of site.

The permanent camp attracts those who desire a season of rest in the solitude and quiet of primeval forest, where, encamped on the shore of a beautiful lake or on an island, a sandy beach within a few rods of the tent, one may relax from the strain of city life. A hammock swung between the towering pine trees, the atmosphere filled with the sweet scent of pines and spruces, a wonderful view of blue waters bordered by lofty cliffs and forested heights, a sky of deepest blue with floating clouds of purest white, the air resonant with the songs of birds—what better ideal of peace could one desire?

And such rich and gamey fish await the angler's effort: red salmon-trout, speckled trout, the gamey black bass, pickerel and pike, all in abundance and within easy reach of camp. For exercise and pleasure combined there is the canoe or skiff and a most delightful sail over the rippling waters.



This variety of camp-life appeals especially to the

man who wishes to take his family for a summer's outing to safe waters, where bathing, fishing and boating may be had and all at moderate cost. Once the expense of outfit and transportation has been paid, there remains little need for spending money in the wilds.

The shifting camp attracts the young man who, with a companion or two, desires to try his muscle, to explore new lakes and rivers through a forest-clad region, perhaps to feel the thrill of running rapids, and to visit daily changing scenes. His delight is to realize a sense of independence, to feel that he may grapple with the forces of nature and safely rely upon his self-resourcefulness. The route may lead him through uninhabited wilds, from lake to lake, after the manner of the historic coureur-des-bois, carrying his pack on the narrow trails through forests around rapids and waterfalls, or paddling for many miles and hours on the lakes or rivers.

Only he who has ventured thus through the forest depths understands the supreme enjoyment that awaits the hardy canoeist. All day long he travels through ever changing scenes and as twilight approaches pitches his tent upon some open shore and enjoys that rest of mind and body which is the reward of honest toil. Care-free they gather round the camp-fire as the darkness deepens and relate incidents of the day's experience, laying plans for the morrow's venture, while silently the moon rises above the heights and sends its silver rays across the dark waters.

The practical profits resulting from open-air camp-life differ from other profits in this respect that while being enjoyable they are also permanent. What is gained from nature is long retained and many owe their health and well-ordered physique to summer days spent in Canadian camp.

There are the physical profits. Breathing such wonderfully pure air by day and night completely oxygenates the blood. Long hours of profound sleep on balsam beds recuperate the tired nerves. Wholesome exercise, good food and honest labour develop the strength, restore life to jaded bodily functions and create a stock of health to survive the winter's strain. Under the influence of the bracing air of Canadian forest-lands, labour

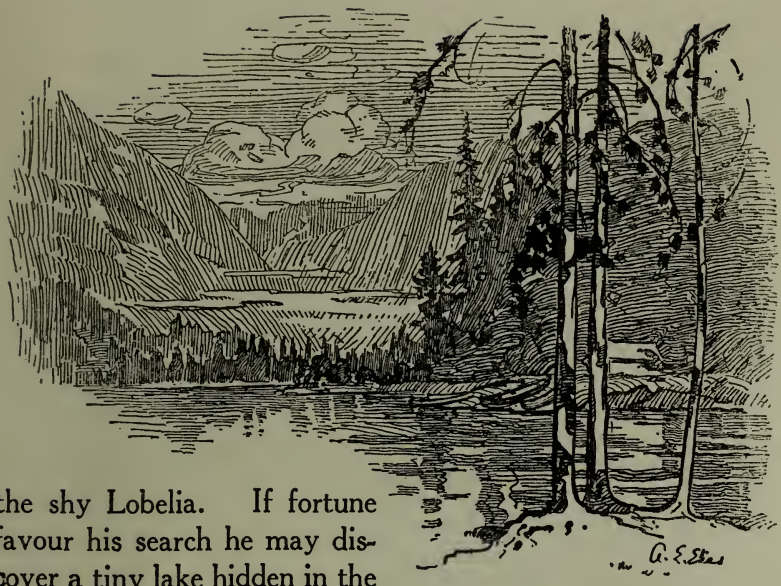
becomes a pleasure and physically one may accomplish without fatigue far more than is possible in the spent air of a city.

The pursuit of some form of nature study while camping brings not only its reward of intellectual profit in the acquirement of knowledge, but great pleasure in the effort. To discover the wonders and treasures of nature, one must dwell for a time in the silent places and live in harmony with the spirit of nature. The professional naturalist. the casual student, or the simpler

observer of nature's phenomena, will find an inexhaustible field of delightful study in the pleasure grounds of Canada.

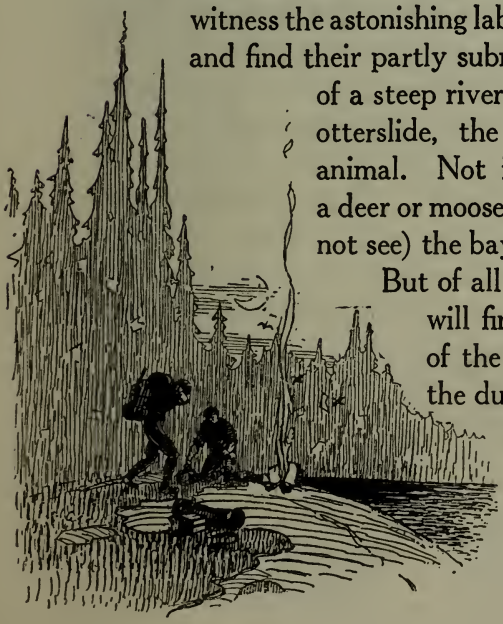
One may be interested in amateur astronomy. The clear, dry atmosphere of the Canadian night reveals the heavens studded with countless stars of wonderful brilliancy invisible through denser air. In the great expanse of the open, the constellations of summer are easily identified and by a simple chart the famous stars of history may be named.

If the flora of the country attract one, unusual opportunities occur for the study of the trees, the identification of ferns, orchids and mosses for which the northern woods are famous. Specimens for future mounting are easily gathered of the fragrant shield fern, of Lady's-tresses, the rare Calypso, or



the shy Lobelia. If fortune favour his search he may discover a tiny lake hidden in the forest depths where grow undisturbed the beautiful Pogonia and rarest orchids. Or in the open hardwood bush he may discover the deadly Amanita and other gaily painted mushrooms.

The habits of forest-dwelling animals are of interest to others, and many surprises await the cautious observer. In some stream he may unexpectedly encounter a beaver-dam and witness the astonishing labours of those intelligent animals and find their partly submerged houses. Or on the side of a steep river bank he may perchance see an otterslide, the playground of that sportive animal. Not infrequently will he encounter a deer or moose, and even hear (though he may not see) the baying wolf.



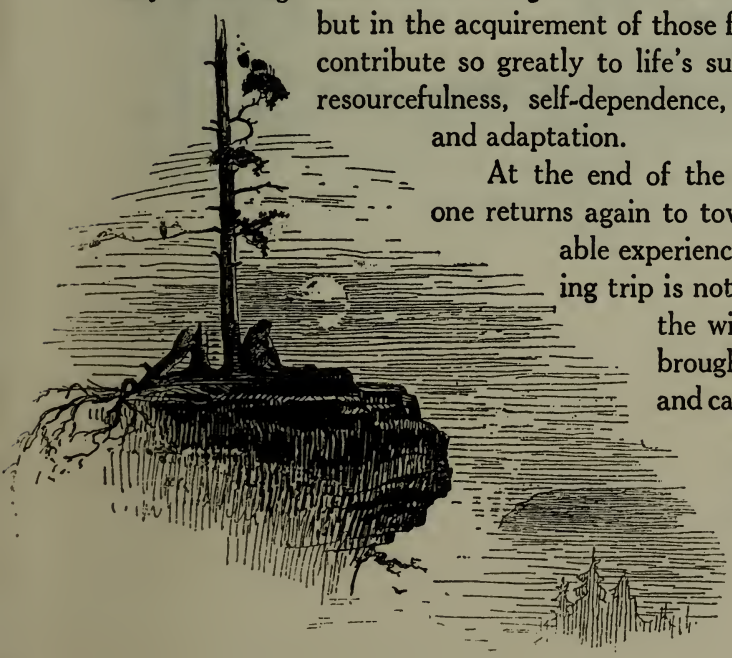
But of all the forest treasures perhaps he will find most enjoyment in the songs of the birds. One who has heard in the dusk of the evening the plaintive, strangely beautiful song of the olive-backed thrush, or the hermit thrush, will travel far

to hear them again. The songs of the winter wren and the ruby-crowned kinglet resound through the forest in wondrous beauty. The song-sparrow will greet you with cheerful welcome as you approach his island home, the sociable nuthatch will entertain you wherever you stop for lunch, the white-throat sparrow in the early morn will awaken you with his long-drawn "Canada, Canada," and the blue jay will follow you for long distances heralding his warning note. Perhaps that famous dweller of the far north, the "whiskey-jack," or Canada jay, will visit your camp and receive your contribution. That great mysterious bird, the loon, with its strange cries and its burden of Indian legend, will bring you food for thought and wonder. Nowhere but in the Canadian forest-land will be found such a host of singing birds in the summer months.

The camper learns to mould himself into conformity with existing conditions, entering into the harmony of nature, and in the process develops his own individuality. Difficulties, unexpected emergencies, and sudden changes will test his power

of self-control and stimulate his mental acumen. After facing the forces of nature and discovering the value of a stout heart, one returns to city life a stronger and healthier man.

No other sport can equal camping in the development not only of strength and health mingled with continuous pleasure, but in the acquirement of those faculties which contribute so greatly to life's success, namely, resourcefulness, self-dependence, inventiveness and adaptation.



At the end of the sojourn when one returns again to town, the enjoyable experience of the camping trip is not forgotten, for the wise camper has brought his camera and caught a series of views, a faithful record and a reminder of

happy days in camp. Looking at these scenes of pleasant memory, one feels anew the call of the wild and throughout the winter months dreams of another trip in the lakeland of Canada.

ERNEST VOORHIS.

Enquiries regarding the natural resources and attractions of Canada, both in summer and winter, will receive attention if directed to the Natural Resources Intelligence Service, Department of the Interior, Ottawa.